



HOWARD MARKLEIN

STATE SENATOR • 17TH SENATE DISTRICT

Capitol Update

By Senator Howard Marklein

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This Is What I'm Hearing: Summarizing My Listening Sessions

I just finished a series of eight listening sessions in the 17th Senate District. Throughout the last month, I have been to Necedah, Mauston, Kendall, Platteville, Dodgeville, Reedsburg, Darlington and Monroe. Approximately 200 people attended the sessions combined. This is terrific turn-out and I am honored that so many residents of our communities took the time to visit with me.

I also received many emails and phone calls from those who could not attend a session. Unfortunately, we had to cancel sessions in Richland Center and Fennimore due to icy conditions, but I appreciate the follow-up from those who had planned to attend.

There were many recurring ideas that were shared at the listening sessions. I always think it is interesting to observe the issues that are repeated in every session contrasted with issues that are limited to specific regions. With a district as large, geographically, as the 17th District, there are issues that are a hot topic in Juneau county, but no one mentions them in Grant county. Then again, there are issues that everyone mentions!

Overall, the following six topics were mentioned at every listening session:

- Transportation Funding – the need for a solution and additional funding in rural Wisconsin.
- Broadband Expansion – grow broadband technology in areas that do not have it.
- School Finance – continue funding public schools and concerns about school choice.
- Shared Revenue – improve shared revenue for rural municipalities.
- Redistricting – consider the “Iowa Model” for drawing districts maps or another nonpartisan approach.
- Department of Natural Resources – concerns about proposed changes to the department.

Regionally, attendees shared concerns about the following topics:

- UW System – funding and morale among faculty (Platteville)
- Cardinal-Hickory Creek Transmission Line project – route and necessity (Dodgeville, Platteville)
- Workforce needs (Necedah)
- Water Quality (Necedah, Monroe)

Many of the concerns and ideas shared at the listening sessions will be addressed as part of state budget. Deep analysis of the budget and deliberations will begin once the Governor delivers his budget to the legislature on February 8, 2017.

Overall, I share many of the concerns raised during the listening sessions and I will be seeking ways to impact the budget and legislation related to these issues. I am currently working on a bill to expand

funding for expanding rural broadband grants and I will be reaching out to the Public Service Commission to express my concerns about the Cardinal-Hickory Transmission Line.

Even though the listening sessions are over, I am still seeking your input and ideas. Please do not hesitate to email, call or write to me. I also appreciate those who have taken time to complete my Legislative Survey. It is open until January 31, 2017 and is available on my website.

For more information and to connect with me, visit my website <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/17/marklein> and subscribe to my weekly E-Update by sending an email to Sen.Marklein@legis.wisconsin.gov. Do not hesitate to call 800-978-8008 if you have input, ideas or need assistance with any state-related matters.

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